

Swaffham Bulbeck Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty

Many of these stories were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014. They are supplemented by some selections 'From our Old Files' published in the Cambridge Independent Press and other notes.

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at bit.ly/CambsCollection

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.
I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get in touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the 1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2016

1897 03 10

Swaffham Bulbeck utilise pond as parish room, p2

1897 07 13

The villages of Swaffham Prior and Swaffham Bulbeck were the scene of an interesting ceremony when the marriage of Miss Isabella Maude Allix of Swaffham Prior House and Captain Edward Young of the Royal Engineers took place. The church was filled to overflowing and the aisle was lined with eight non-commissioned officers all of whom, to judge by the array of medals on their breasts, were accustomed to perform a services somewhat more arduous and less ornamental than on this occasion. The bride wore a dress of rich ivory satin with chiffon sleeves trimmed with old Limerick lace and sprays of myrtle and orange blossom. After signing the register the bride and bridegroom were met at the vestry by three little boys carrying baskets of flowers and the little fellows walking backwards in true court style strewn the bride's path to her carriage. After the ceremony the bridal party returned to Swaffham Prior House, passing under a triumphal arch which had been erected over the lodge gate.

1901 04 26

The first Nonconformist building ever erected in Swaffham Bulbeck –a Free Church hall – was opened. For the best part of 50 years services have been held casually in various dwelling houses and clubrooms by laymen but there had been no central meeting place. The frame was part of the old Anatomical Schools, and was purchased for £50. Mr Stevens removed the building from Cambridge to its present site.

1904 04 21

Swaffham Bulbeck inhabitants were surprised to see a piece of land adjoining the Malting railed in and found that workmen had received orders from the property owners to fence a portion of the green. A public meeting was at once called to protest against the encroachment of Poores' Charity land. Much amusement was caused when it was discovered that the fence so hurriedly erected had been just as quickly taken down, leaving just a few stakes to mark the disputed territory. The land had long been looked upon as parish property and although the Maltings had changed hands on several occasions never before had there been a claim set up for that portion of the village green next to the Swan.

1905 03 07

Swaffham Bulbeck electors considered a new draft scheme for regulating the Poor's Charity. One clause that caused such a stir related to £25 to be applied for educational purposes and administered by a separate foundation. If carried out the charity would be taken out of the hands of the original trustees and given to the foundation managers. If they gave them any power they would not know where it would finish. After considerable discussion the meeting rejected the proposals. 05 03 07 e-f05 04 17a

1905 11 04

Swaffham Bulbeck charity scheme abandoned, p3

1905 11 04

Justices awarded compensation under the scheme for reducing the number of public houses. They included the Hoops pubs in Kneesworth, Melbourn and Steeple Morden, the Sir Harry Smith at Swavesey and the Ram's Head at Swaffham Bulbeck. In Oakington The Windmill, King's Head and Plough and Harrow were closed. But the closure of the 'Wait for the Bus' at Bottisham was contested; others Rams Head, Swaffham Bulbeck; Swaffham Prior: White Hart; Swavesey: Railroad, Bird in Hand; Cottenham: Windmill; Dry Drayton: Rose and Crown 05 11 04b-d

1905 11 07

The new scheme of the Charity Commissioners relating to the Swaffham Bulbeck Poor's Fen has met with disfavour with inhabitants. Eight of them drove forty head of cattle off the Fen, which had been let by the Trustees under the new scheme. The first scheme was that the land should be laid out in allotments or garden lands but it was two miles from the village and inconvenient. There were already 114 allotments in the parish of which 20 were not let. 05 11 07b & c

1906 08 10

Swaffham Bulbeck Poors Fen charity, p3

1907 12 07

Swaffham Bulbeck windmill has passed into the hands of the destroyers. For some time past the top portion of the building, which is over a century old, has been unsafe and as it has only been used occasionally for grinding 'grist' to have spent £100 on its repair would have meant financial loss to the owner. The brickwork foundation, about ten feet in height, will be left and roofed over. - 07 12 07

1907 12 28

A pretty wedding took place at Swaffham Bulbeck when James Fordham married Emily Nash, both of whom are deaf. The bride was dressed in cashmere silk with a hat trimmed with chiffon. The service was interpreted to the numerous deaf friends in the deaf and dumb manual language by Mr G. Mackenzie, Cambridge missionary to the deaf. 07 12 28c

1908 02 25

Miss Sophia Smith told the court she had started a gymnasium for boys in Swaffham Bulbeck. But since it had been dissolved she had been constantly annoyed. Boys shouted 'How is the lady in tights'. She did not wear tights at the gymnasium: she wore a short skirt below her knees and knickerbockers. Her father said he'd had the granary cleared and fixed up as a gymnasium to keep the lads off the street. That was the way they abused him for his trouble. 08 02 25b

1908 09 18

The Cambridge Church of England Mission to the Deaf and Dumb was started two years ago to meet their spiritual needs. It meets at St Philip's church and attracts people from Swaffham Bulbeck, Milton and Trumpington. Several special services of Holy Communion have been held with Mr G.A. Mackenzie interpreting in the sign language. CWN 08 09 18 p5

1909 01 08

Pension day in villages – Cottenham, Swaffham Bulbeck, Histon, Over, Stretham, Isleham, Haddenham, Longstanton – 09 01 08

1909 12 31

On Tuesday evening a wall of the stables and granary owned by Mr Abraham Fordham at Swaffham Bulbeck fell to the ground. Owing to the collapse of the wall about 200 combs of barley and oats were precipitated into the yard. To add to his misfortune a heavy rain was falling at the time. Some horses stabled below had a very narrow escape from injury. A heavy portion of the flooring above crashed down on the manger, fortunately without causing any injury to the animals. CWN 09 12 31

1909 12 31

At Swaffham Bulbeck on Christmas Day a portion of a wall of a cottage the property of Edward Fordham, tenanted by Mr Sidney Butler and family and Mrs Thompson, widow, crashed down into the adjoining garden. The contents of a bedroom and several other rooms were exposed to view. Owing to the mishap the families were compelled to pass the night as best they might on the ground floor, the bedrooms being considered too public and unsafe to make the night in the open a comfortable experience. CWN 09 12 31

1910 12 16

Messrs A.M. Robinson held their Christmas sale as usual at the Cattle Market. Amongst the prize-winners was Mr C. Butler of Swaffham Bulbeck whose five pigs were purchased by J. Prior, butcher of Burleigh Street. There was a fine show of hogs over ten stone which was won by W.A. Payne of Fulbourn with a special prize awarded to E. Gautrey of Cottenham. Mr Backler of Linton won in the sow class while Miss Camps of Chesterton was best in the cottagers' section, her hog being sold to Eastmans 10 12 16a

1911 02 24

Swaffham Bulbeck parish council applied to borrow £800 to purchase 'Denny Close' for use as a recreation ground. An Inspector examined the proposals and was told that children were a nuisance in the street as there was nowhere else for them to play while cricket and football clubs had difficulty as none of the tenant farmers were prepared to place any of their meadows at their service. 11 02 24g

1911 07 28

Swaffham Bulbeck bricklayer stole peas 11 07 28

1912 09 20

Swaffham Bulbeck see plane, troops based on the Green, Histon – 12 09 20o

1912 10 11

Swaffham Bulbeck Parish Council took possession of the Denny Close and Plantation which was purchased as a recreation ground in 1911 to mark the Coronation of King George V. The site is delightfully studded with ancient elms and oaks, forming a charming spot for children out of reach of the cricket balls and footballs on the old pasture. The formal opening will be commemorated by a fancy-dress football match. The feed of the recreation ground will be offered to Mr Fison on condition public can use the meadow for recreation as often as required 12 10 11

1913 04 11 p11

Swaffham Bulbeck technical evening classes

1913 10 31

Swaffham Bulbeck game trespass

13 11 28 p8

Swaffham Bulbeck Crown Inn transfer refused

1925 09 26

The ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the new Evangelical Free Church at Swaffham Bulbeck was performed. Four big stones were laid and a number of bricks, the donors having each given a guinea towards the church fund. The site was given ten years ago and it is estimated the church will cost £850. Captain Tinton made a plea for the retaining of the mission hall, little would be got for it if it were sold and it might be utilised as a social amusement institute for young men. Mr Selby said that it was in 1900 that the Free Church Wardens' Society was formed with the object of providing a building for Nonconformists to worship in and when the building was opened it is hoped all the debt may be cleared off.

1929 09 26

Ouse Drainage Board tax battle at Swaffham Bulbeck CDN 26.9.1929

1932 10 07

A Swaffham Bulbeck man told the Bankruptcy Court that he'd dealt in pigs and poultry, saved money and bought ten acres of land at Lode. He then bought his father's coal carts for £90 and supplied coal chiefly in small bags. But there was a lot of competition and he'd had to lower his prices. He owed considerable sums to coal merchants, then the corn crop failed. He put his land up for auction but it failed to reach the reserve and later sold for only £150. 32 10 07a

1934 02 221

Theft from Swaffham Bulbeck church – 34 02 21

1935 11 13

Sensation was caused among the villagers of Swaffham Bulbeck by a shooting affair which ended in the death of a young married man. His wife is nearly prostrate with grief. A particularly distressing feature of the tragedy is that there are five small children, all under the age of nine, and another is expected within a short time. The sensation was increased when, after a night search by police officers, another villager was charged with wilful murder. 35 11 13a & b 35 11 14a

1935 11 27

Swaffham Bulbeck murder – 35 11 27 & a

1935 12 05

At Burwell various houses in Parsonage Lane, Fuller's Lane, Burnt Yard and Beldam Square should be demolished together with six at Malting Cottages, the Medical Officer advised. Four houses at Mutton Row and two in Lower Road Swaffham Prior should also be pulled down. Many unfit houses were still occupied at Swaffham Bulbeck but four at Quarry Lane and two in the High Street should be cleared as soon as there was alternative accommodation for the working-class people who would be displaced. 35 12 05

1936 03 26

Sewage schemes Cheveley Park, Soham, Burwell water, Swaffham Bulbeck ditches and Brinkley smells 36 03 26a

1936 08 20

Lord Fairhaven's Bottisham and Lode garden competition extended to Swaffham Bulbeck – 36 08 20a

1936 12 21

When fire broke out near the organ of Swaffham Bulbeck church all the available men and women rushed to save the tower. After buckets of water failed they used sand taken from heaps by the roadside. Two floors in the tower were burnt out, the organ was badly damaged by scorching and water but the bells remained intact. Next morning smoke was noticed from near the wooden casing of the clock where a beam was smouldering. 36 12 21a & b

1938 05 14

Swaffham Bulbeck Commercial End memories – 38 05 14b

1939 04 11

Swaffham Bulbeck cottage fire – 39 04 11a

1941 03 21

The Young Idea.—From Miss Watson, of Swaffham Bulbeck (says Watchman) come, the following amusing instances of intriguing sayings by children. Small evacuee admiring border of yellow and mauve crocuses saw a few had fallen down after the rain: "I should fink they've been fighting. Mum."—Small boy under school age talking about his new sister, three weeks old, remarked: "What will she do when she grows up, Mum—go to Olivers?"

1950 08 03

While motorcycling along High Street, Swaffham Bulbeck, PC Lawrence Audley saw an 11-years-old boy driving a 10-ton petrol-driven locomotive, pulling two trailers loaded with fairground equipment. He turned his motorcycle round and found the vehicle had stopped and the boy's father, who had been standing nearby, was in the driving seat. Pleading guilty the defending solicitor said "It was really a childish escapade, it is not really unnatural for a small boy to do so, especially one living on fairs"

1951 10 10

Bottisham Small-Bore Rifle Club held its outdoor shoot on the new outdoor range at Swaffham Bulbeck. A great deal of work was entailed in the preparation of the site and gratitude was expressed to Mr Stevens for the use of his land for the range, and to the police and military authorities for their help and prompt issuing of the necessary permits. The warden of Bottisham Village College has given every encouragement to the patriotic recreation of small-bore rifle shooting.

1956 10 05

The old heating system in Swaffham Bulbeck church installed in 1924 was out of order and they could not get anybody to stoke the boiler. So during the cold weather they installed electric fires, attaching them by 'collars' to the pillars. But they had not applied for a faculty and a Consistory Court ordered them to be removed as they looked ugly and clashed with the architecture. 56 10 05c & d

1961 09 29

The blacksmith's yard at Lode was the scene of unusual activity when Bill Sargent and his two assistants, James Borley of Teversham and 'Nibby' Aves of Swaffham Bulbeck, set about 'shoeing' seven cartwheels belonging to Ambrose Estates of Stuntney. Bill has been blacksmith in the village for 42 years and in the old days it was normal for him to 'shoe' as many as 200 wheels during a season. He is one of the very few blacksmiths who still practice the craft but has no son to pass the trade on to. When he retires Lode will probably never again see wheel shoeing in progress. 61 09 29b

1962 01 05

Baldwin Manor, Swaffham Bulbeck – 62 01 05

1962 07 02

St Mary's Church, Swaffham Bulbeck, held a parade to mark the feast of St Peter, reviving a ceremony that has not been celebrated for 30 years. Led by Burwell Band, members of the British Legion, Fire Brigade, Sunday School and Mother's Union processed round the village, stopping five times for the band to play. The parade was followed by a flower-decked hay cart depicting the carpentry and stone mason's tools being used in the restoration of the south aisle of the church 62 07 02a

1962 10 26

"I'd like a farthing for every rivet I've knocked into shoes these last 30 years I've been a cobbler", says Mr W. Cordoroy. It's fascinating work, especially with modern stiletto heels. Most cobblers put new heels on, but he repairs them. "I used to work in my home village of Swaffham Bulbeck before the war, but it was hard going so I moved to Cambridge. In those days I used to work all hours - sometimes I didn't finish until after midnight. No farm labourer had more than one pair of boots and I had to repair them when they weren't working. That meant long, awkward hours. Now I can go home in the evening and watch the telly" 62 10 26a

1963 06 12

A Georgian property at Swaffham Bulbeck containing one of the oldest and largest gold medal bakeries in the country has been sold after operating successfully for more than a century. It has been run by Charles Collison since 1950 supplying fresh bread throughout the locality. But now it is uneconomic in the face of competition from large-scale producers. Built by Smith and Son of Lambeth, the bakery oven has been maintained by them ever since through a number of owners and a recent change from coal to oil as its fuel. 63 06 12a

1963 07 31

The Oak public house at Swaffham Bulbeck has been in the Blaydon family for nearly 100 years and 77-year-old Mary Blaydon has served behind the bar for 20 of them. But she has always refused to have a drink with the customers as she prefers a nice cup of tea. Now she is retiring. Mary remembers when beer was fivepence-halfpenny a pint and the pub was packed and the singing - you never hear

anything like it now, people are not so lively. It's all these cars and bingo that takes people away from the pubs, she says. 63 07 31

1964 03 20

Swaffham Bulbeck village life photo feature – 64 03 20e

1964 07 11

Hayrick with thatched roof in Lordship farm, Swaffham Bulbeck – 64 07 11a

1964 11 04

Bolebec Cottage, Swaffham Bulbeck and two other derelict 16th-century cottages converted to one house – 64 11 04

1964 11 05

Swaffham Bulbeck in danger of stagnating – 64 11 05b

1974 01 09

People living at Swaffham Bulbeck are being asked by the Cambridgeshire planners to tell them whether they would prefer an expensive bypass built around the village or a cheaper, shorter road between the two main built-up areas. The new road is needed to do away with the three right-angle bends in the centre of the village.

1974 05 10

Water seeping through the banks of the Reach, Burwell, Swaffham Bulbeck and Bottisham lodes presented the Great Ouse local land drainage committee with a cash dilemma: spending a smaller amount of money but partly closing the system to navigation or spending a lot more to allow boating to continue. The engineer said there was a straight choice. This involved demolishing all or part of the high-level lode systems so creating a new low-level system of drains, or retaining the high-level systems and controlling the seepage that occurs. "Once you close a system of waterways to navigation you will never get it open again", he said.

1974 08 06

Battling mothers at Abington last night won the first round in their fight to stop Education chiefs from removing a mobile classroom at the village's primary school. Workmen who arrived at lunchtime intended to carry off all three sections of the classroom to a school at Swaffham Bulbeck. But a group of more than a dozen mothers sat in the final part of the classroom and prevented the workmen removing it. The parents say the village hall, which the Department want the children to use instead, is unsuitable for teaching in

1975 01 27

Meteorologists at Honiton recorded gusts of up to 56 knots and an average wind of gale force eight during storms which swept the region leaving a trail of damage. At Swaffham Bulbeck the roof of the Girl Guides hut was lifted up and deposited on the village's fire station roof.

1975 11 13

The turkey, once a rare delicacy for the ordinary dining table, now reigns supreme on the country's Christmas menu. This season there are forecasts that turkeys will cost 40% more than last year with the top weights selling at about 50p a lb. One of the men rearing turkeys locally is Mr David Rayner, who farms 1200 acres at Burgh Hall, Swaffham Bulbeck. He has been producing turkeys for 15 years on an otherwise arable enterprise and now averages 10,000 birds a year

1985 05 30

Swaffham Bulbeck villagers are fighting to save a historic water mill from the bulldozers. There has been a mill on the site since the 1640s and it only needs someone with imagination to restore it to its original glory, one of the campaigners says. But the owner claims villagers opposed an earlier plan to

renovate the mill. He was forced to alter his corn merchants business with less emphasis on grain trading when planning permission to expand the site was turned down by the council. Now a potential buyer wants to demolish it 85 05 30a

1985 09 01

At the sound of a high-pitched squeal from a paging device 12 Burwell men leave their workbenches, desks or beds and go off to face fire, flood, fumes or any one of a range of disasters. They are officially known as retained fire-fighters and are on call 365 days a year. Other areas such as Swaffham Bulbeck, Linton, Papworth and Kimbolton find it difficult to make up the minimum of a four-person crew and more recruits are needed. The annual retainer starts at £789 and there is a 'turn-out' fee of £5.83 for riding on the fire engine to an emergency call. 85 09 01a

1987 05 05

A Swaffham Bulbeck architect has won a prestigious award for the restoration of Landbeach's 12th-century church. The King of Prussia's Gold Medal, awarded by the Historic Churches Preservation Trust, will be presented at Lambeth Palace. Cecil Bourne, who has been supervising work on the church for the past eight years, says the church was quite a dangerous structure and badly in need of repair. Fund raisers have collected £150,000 for work to the tower, spire, nave and chancel but more remains to be done. 87 05 05a

1988 03 01

Sarah Sturgess is the backbone of the Swaffham Bulbeck fire station. Fifty years ago she and her husband took it upon themselves to convert the barn at the back of their Sun pub into what is now a modern fire station. When the fire bell rang she would cycle round the village to round up the part-time firemen and in cold weather she would remove the spark plugs from the fire engine and put them in her Aga oven to make sure they would work when needed. Still, whatever time of day or night the men are called out she ensures there is a cup of tea and sandwiches waiting for them when they get back. Last year the service realised she was not going to retire so, on her 90th birthday, they threw a surprise party and presented her with a silver statuette of a fireman 88 03 01a

1988 08 10

At the Royal Oak in Swaffham Bulbeck you might find the local gamekeeper in deep conversation with the midnight poacher or an academic submitting to the wisdom of the wind-blown fenman. There is a piano of indeterminate age subjected to frequent abuse – whatever music is played it all sounds the same. Landlord of this haven of sanity is Bob Scutton who is totally blind. But he can tell the thud of a dart that has missed and when he asks onlookers to move because he "can't see the board", they do. "I don't have customers anymore I have friends", he says. 88 08 10

1989 08 01

It was in 1773 that one Matthew Clarke first served ale at the Royal Oak in Commercial End, Swaffham Bulbeck. And more than 200 years later it fell to blind landlord Bob Scrutton to close the door for the last time. Known as "Blind Bob's", it was an old-fashioned alehouse free from chips or juke boxes. The piper played a lament as Bob and his wife said goodbye to the customers who had become friends over 26 years. Everybody will miss the old place 89 08 01a

1989 08 29

Derick Andrews one of first evacuations to Swaffham Bulbeck – memories – 89 08 29